

WHAT'S *New*

in the Metropolitan Police Department



*A weekly update for residents, visitors,
and workers in the District of Columbia*

Friday, May 21, 2004

REGIONAL SMOOTH OPERATOR PROGRAM TARGETS AGGRESSIVE DRIVING THIS SUMMER

The MPDC and dozens of other law enforcement agencies are teaming up again this spring and summer to put the brakes on aggressive driving in the Washington, DC region. The Smooth Operator program, initiated in 1997, strives to reduce aggressive driving by blanketing DC, Maryland and Virginia with four, one-week law enforcement waves, combined with an extensive public information campaign. This year's campaign highlights the dangers of aggressive driving around large trucks and buses and provides potentially life-saving information on how to drive safely around these vehicles. Trucks are more vulnerable to aggressive driving behaviors because they require longer stopping distances than smaller cars do, are inherently less maneuverable and have larger blind spots. But automobile drivers are far more vulnerable in an aggressive driving crash. With nearly 100 participating public agencies and private groups, including state and local law enforcement agencies, the 2004 Smooth Operator campaign is reminding citizens of the consequences of aggressive driving, including fines, jail time, or worse – injuring or killing someone. This year's theme is Aggressive Driving Is Contagious - Catch It and You're Caught! As the Smooth Operator campaign has grown, so has its effectiveness. The four enforcement waves in 2003 resulted in more than 238,000 citations - nearly four times the 62,000 issued in the initial year. In addition, public awareness of such law enforcement efforts has increased from 38 percent before the public awareness campaigns began in 2000 to 78 percent last year.

- ① Read the kickoff news release at:

<http://www.mpdcc.org/blue/news.asp?id=2716>

- ① The first of four Smooth Operator enforcement waves is May 23-29. For more information on Smooth Operator, including the dates of the other three waves, go to:

<http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/traffic/smoothop.shtml>

- ① For information on Smooth Operator results in 2003 and 2002, click on:

<http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/traffic/smoothop.shtml#results>

THIRD CITYWIDE SURVEY OF CRIME VICTIMS UNDER WAY

In its continuing efforts to measure – and improve upon – crime victims' satisfaction with the police services they receive, the MPDC has contracted with Howard University to conduct a telephone survey of recent crime victims in DC. This is the third survey of crime victims conducted by the MPDC in the past five years. The citywide survey began on May 17, and is expected to last approximately two weeks. Calls are being made during the daytime and evening hours and on Saturdays by Howard University interviewers, who have received special training in administering the victim questionnaire. A stratified sample of approximately 1,000 victims of robbery, assault, burglary, auto theft and arson during the fall of 2003 are being contacted. Survey respondents are asked questions concerning the demeanor and helpfulness of the police officers they encountered, the timeliness of the follow-up provided by detectives, the information and assistance that were offered, and victims' overall feelings of safety and satisfaction. All responses are kept confidential. Survey data will be analyzed by Howard's Department of Sociology and Anthropology. Findings will be used as the basis for future changes in policies, procedures and training on improving the police response to crime victims.

- ① Learn more about the survey at:

<http://mpdc.dc.gov/news/news.asp?id=2714>

- ① The results of the MPDC's most recent survey of crime victims can be found (in PDF) at:

http://mpdc.dc.gov/news/pubs/pdf/VictimSurvey_04.pdf

- ① Information about victim assistance in DC can be found at:

<http://mpdc.dc.gov/serv/victims/victims.shtml>

MAYOR, CHIEF RAMSEY AND COMMUNITY LEADERS TOUR GEORGIA AVENUE “HOT SPOT”

To combat crime and violence in some of DC’s most dangerous neighborhoods, Mayor Williams earlier this year directed the MPDC and other city agencies to initiate comprehensive anti-crime strategies in 14 designated “hot spots” throughout the city. This week, Mayor Williams joined Chief Ramsey, Ward 1 Councilmember Jim Graham and other community leaders in a tour of one of those hot spots: the 3100-3600 blocks of Georgia Avenue, NW. During 2003, more than 700 felony and misdemeanor crimes were reported in this area, the most of any of the 14 hot spots. So beginning February 1, this area has been the focus of increased police attention, including regular foot beats, alley patrols, special attention to vacant buildings and increased arrest activity. In addition, other city agencies have intensified efforts to address conditions that can lead to crime. Approximately 20 abandoned autos have been towed, nuisance properties inspected and abated, alleys cleaned, and more than 300 traffic signs replaced. During the first three-and-one-half months of the initiative, serious (Index) crime declined by 14 percent, when compared with the same period a year earlier. The other 13 hot spots are located in various parts of the District. All were selected based on an analysis of crime data, as well as input from local police officials and other city agencies.

KNOW THE FACTS ABOUT IDENTIFY THEFT

As our lives have become more integrated with technology, keeping our private information confidential has become more and more difficult. Your personal information is regularly requested by others, partially completed credit card applications arrive in the mail almost every week, and electronic transactions have become commonplace. Although all of these changes have the potential to simplify our lives, they can also make it easy for someone to take advantage of the situation and steal your identity. Identify theft is one of the fastest growing crimes in the United States, and sometimes one of the more difficult crimes to investigate and solve. This week, the MPDC posted new information on its website designed to help residents reduce their risk of becoming victims of identify theft. This section provides examples of identity theft, offer tips on how to protect your personal information and contains various resources that can help you combat identity theft. Finally, the section covers steps on what to do if you are a victim.

NEWS & NOTES

Seat Belt Mobilization. Over the next week, the MPDC will participate in a nationwide mobilization designed to get more people to use seat belts and buckle up children in age-appropriate safety restraints. During the Operation ABC (America Buckles-up Children) Mobilization and “Click It or Ticket” campaign, which runs through the Memorial Day weekend, the MPDC will run seat belt safety checkpoints at various locations around the District. Details on DC’s “Click It or Ticket” campaign are at <http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/traffic/clickit.shtm>.

Chief Ramsey on “Live at Five.” Chief Ramsey discusses public safety issues and takes phone calls from listeners on Wednesday, May 26, from 5-6 pm, on the “Live at Five” program on WOL 1450-AM.

Help Children Go to Summer Camp. The Chief of Police’s Citizens Advisory Council (CAC) is working to raise \$25,000 to help at-risk youth in DC attend summer camp. The Joseph K. Smith Memorial Summer Camp Fund, under the direction of the CAC, is holding a dinner on Friday, June 4, from 6:30-10 pm, at the Ukrainian Catholic National Shrine of the Holy Family, 4250 Harewood Road, NE. For more information or to support this youth crime prevention effort, contact George W. Fenderson of the Chief’s CAC, at (202) 291-6727.

- ① The Georgia Avenue hot spot is located in the new PSA 302. For information about the newly restructured PSAs, including maps and rosters of officials, go to: <http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/districts/districts.shtm>

- ① To access the MPDC’s identity theft section, go to: <http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/consumer/idtheft.shtm>

- ① DC residents who have been identity theft victims may contact the MDPC’s Financial Crimes and Fraud Unit at (202) 727-4159. The address is 300 Indiana Avenue, NW, Room 3019, Washington, DC 20001.

DATA BOX

Homicides (as of 5/21/04)

- 2004: 77
- 2003: 94
- % Change: -18.1%
- Closure Rate: 54.5% (42 closures)
- Adult Arrests (week end. 5/15/04)
- Total: 1,062
- Drugs: 177
- Weapons: 15
- Motor Vehicle Theft: 14
- Prostitution/Sex Offenses: 70

Firearm Recoveries (as of 5/18/04)

- May: 97
- 2004 Total: 798
- Traffic Fatalities (as of 5/21/04)
- 2004: 24
- 2003: 20
- % Change: +20.0%

Information, ideas, or comments about this service? Send an e-mail to **KEVIN MORISON**, MPDC’s Director of Corporate Communications, at kevin.morison@dc.gov. Would you like to have this information e-mailed to you? Just go to our Website and register with **Crimereports.com**.

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